

Down Home Friendly Service at Mel's

Mel's Small Engine started in 2000 as a one-man service only shop for lawn and garden equipment and air-cooled engines. A recently completed expansion added a 90 foot x 99 foot shop to Mel's existing 3,000 sq. ft. facility. They now have five employees and sell several lines of lawn and garden equipment and four different engine brands. Mel's is also recognized for skid loader repair and used equipment sales. They service customers mainly in a radius of forty to fifty miles of their location at 107 Washington St., Bancroft, Nebraska, but have customers further away. In addition to lawn and garden sales and service, Mel's services light industrial, with future plans to expand into diesel repair. A new diesel mechanic will be hired to take on the diesel repair business.



Mel's Small Engine, 107 Washington St., Bancroft, Nebraska

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD) provided technical assistance and funds to build the addition. NENEDD and Mel Brokaw, owner of Mel's Small Engine, partnered with the local bank, to provide funds to complete the expansion. Bancroft is a small town of four hundred people, the recently completed expansion project retained four jobs and created one job.

NENEDD is located in Norfolk, NE. Their staff works together to assist communities and individuals with economic development, housing and business loan opportunities. An Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) loan from Rural Development in 2000 funded a business Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program. The RLF has expanded to include a second IRP in 2004. These IRP dollars enable NENEDD to provide the funds needed to fill financial gaps and aid business and industry expansion and the creations of new job opportunities. NENEDD specializes in assisting with business recruitment, retention and expansion, coordinating entrepreneurial training programs and financial packaging. NENEDD business assistance services are available in 26 northeast Nebraska counties. These IRP dollars have funded 65 loans in rural Nebraska.

"The funds NENEDD receives from USDA-Rural Development are very important to the continued growth of the communities, counties and local businesses that we serve," said Thomas L. Higginbotham Jr, NENEDD executive director.

Obligation Amount: \$1.25 Million IRP loans
Date of Obligation: \$750,000 IRP loan 8/25/2000; \$500,000 IRP loan 9/30/04

Congressional District: Representative Fortenberry, District 1; Senators Fischer and Sasse

Partners:

Demographics: 26 counties in northeast Nebraska

Impact: Increased economic activity and employment in rural communities through revolving loan funds for business facilities and community development projects.
